

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 3, 2010
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of February 3, 2010 was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair King, Youth Commissioner Wheeler, Commissioners Susan Wright, Bortoli, Cheechov, Sullivan and Youth Commissioner Kayla Wright. Vice Chair Andrews arrived at 7:17 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais and Secretary Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of September 2, 2009

Commissioner Susan Wright moved, seconded by Commissioner Bortoli, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 2, 2009. Vote 7-0 in favor.

Regular Meeting of December 2, 2009

Commissioner Susan Wright requested two corrections to the minutes. (1) On page 2, paragraph 4 add "a few" to pamphlets in her comment. (2) On page 5, last bullet point correct to state *Carbon that would have been sequestered in natural fields would be lost but the water savings and the reduction of motor emissions should be further analyzed.* Commissioner Sullivan moved, seconded by Commissioner Bortoli, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 2, 2009 with the changes noted. Vote 7-0 in favor.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Committee meeting and the various activities held at the Senior Center. He noted donations on the annual food drive were down. A new ballroom dance class is now offered on Thursday nights. There will be a Disaster Preparedness Workshop and a Senior Safety Day in February. Free tax assistance will be available for seniors and low income citizens.

Commissioner Susan Wright gave an update on the Green Advisory Committee. A few of the Committee members met with some of the City's Senior Management Team to review the Committee's recommendations and to get input from the City departments. The goal was to see

which recommendations could be implemented now prior to presenting the recommendations to the City Council.

Commissioner Andrews arrived at 7:17 p.m.

Commissioner Sullivan reported on the Tree Advisory Committee and their progress on revisions to the Tree Ordinance.

Commissioner Andrews stated the Sports Advisory Committee met with Callander & Associates who gave a presentation on synthetic turf and drainage. The Committee reviewed types of synthetic turf and different overlays for various sports. They also discussed economics and how tournaments may benefit the community. The Committee also talked about the bike bridge with construction starting in March or April. He noted that some light ballasts at the Sports Complex will be replaced and a new floor will be installed in the Conference Center.

Chair King suggested that the Commission designate a representative to speak on behalf of the Commission to the City Council. She noted at the last Council meeting all the Commissioners attended and spoke and if one member were to represent the Commission this may help shorten the length of Council meetings. PRD Gervais added if Commissioners expressed different viewpoints at City Council meetings it may not represent the Commission's position on a topic and agreed that the Commission may want to designate one speaker to represent the group as a whole.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Priority Calendar

PRD Gervais reviewed the status of current Capital Improvement Projects. Semeria Park will likely be back to the Commission in March or April with the results of the geotechnical report. Davey Glen will also be back on the agenda in March or April. The grant request for Davey Glen was submitted for a matching amount of \$450,000. The City will not know if the grant will be awarded until September. Staff would like to have a Plan A using \$450,000 and a Plan B if \$900,000 is available. He noted Commissioner Susan Wright arranged for playground designer Barbara Butler to meet with staff and she will come up with some ideas for Davey Glen Park. In response to Commissioner Cheechov's question PRD Gervais explained it is uncertain if the Landscape Architect hired for Davey Glen will continue with this project. Commissioner Bortoli questioned if the grant money received must be matched by the City and some Commissioners questioned if \$900,000 would be spent on that park.

Secretary Saggau reported that there was a meeting at the dog park in November and the Landscape Architect will prepare some preliminary designs which will be brought to the Commission in April or May. Some of the minor maintenance requests expressed at that meeting have been taken care of.

PRD Gervais noted Council approved applying for a grant for the North Field Turf. The City Tree Planting program design is still being worked on. Trail Improvements continue with the work being completed by volunteers.

PRD Gervais said the Parks & Open Space Master Plan will be reinitiated after the Davey Glen and Semeria Park projects are completed. He noted the original amount of \$50,000 may not be correct and that cost of this item could vary considerably depending on how it is done. PRD Gervais stated that some research was done on what has been completed and what was not. He added that discussion on Barrett Community Center could be included as part of this plan.

PRD Gervais said the Tree Ordinance is moving forward.

PRD Gervais explained there is a full list of projects that the City is working on. The priority calendar does not apply as far as prioritizing capital projects to start working on. He encouraged the Commission to have discussions on what projects they would like to see in the future.

PRD Gervais described funding sources which include Planned Park Account from Quimby Act fees, Fund 308 for facility improvements and operating funds that are used for minor improvements.

PRD Gervais reviewed some ideas in the staff report including: Replace restrooms at Alexander Park, installation of restrooms at O'Donnell Park, long-term improvements at McDougal Park, and a bocce ball court in Twin Pines.

There was Commission interest in installing a bocce ball court in Twin Pines Park and it was suggested that donations could be sought to complete that project.

Commissioner Bortoli recalled when O'Donnell Park improvements were completed in the past the neighborhood did not want restrooms installed in the park. It was noted that this opinion may have changed and it may be worthwhile to check with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Susan Wright questioned if residents are surveyed and suggested using on-line surveys to collect input from park users. She offered to assist the department in creating surveys.

PRD Gervais noted improvements to paper trails could also be considered. This topic had been reviewed by Council and the Commission it was decided to work on some basic designs for Eagle Scouts or other volunteers to work on these projects. He suggested this item could also be considered for further funding. Commissioner Susan Wright asked about the newly acquired land for Open Space Trails and Commissioner Sullivan noted that area is related as there are some paper trails there. Commissioner Sullivan also spoke in support of including improvements in the Open Space Lands and additional improvements to the Water Dog Lake area.

Chair King questioned if there are any additional fields being considered for artificial turf. PRD Gervais noted there has been some discussion on improving the South Field and it could possibly be another site for artificial turf.

Commissioner Susan Wright requested clarification on Council discussion on funds and a lock box. PRD Gervais explained that discussion was related to the idea of setting aside some of the player registration fees to pay for replacement of the artificial turf when it wears out.

PRD Gervais reviewed the Non-Profit Parks Foundation which is currently below the line. He explained the City can be a partner with a Foundation. He noted there has been talk of the sports groups starting one to raise funds for the field. He said there is now a PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) at the Community Learning Center and they went under the San Francisco Center which handles all the paperwork for non-profits for a fee. The Park Boosters is another non-profit organization that donates towards park projects. PRD Gervais said he thought this Foundation could be created during the creation of the Park & Open Space Master but if there was initiative to work on it sooner in could be moved up.

PRD Gervais reported the Emmett Plaza project will be starting this spring with a minor amount of landscaping improvements.

Chair King suggested holding off on the Non-Profit Parks Foundation and addressing it with the Park & Open Space Master Plan.

Commissioner Andrews questioned if the Non-Profit Parks Foundation would encompass all the foundations involved with Parks & Recreation. PRD Gervais noted that there needs to be Commission discussion on if that should be done or if they should remain separate non-profits. Commissioner Andrews noted it is possible to set up a foundation with separate accounts for each group.

Commissioner Susan Wright suggested having an expert in non-profits come to a meeting to provide a presentation to the Commission to get an idea of what other cities have done when setting up a Non-Profit Parks Foundation. She also questioned if it would be possible to get some interest from potential sponsors by putting something in the Activity Guide. PRD Gervais noted it would be helpful to get some demographic studies to find out what people are willing to spend on parks.

Commissioner Andrews said he thought there are people in the community that want to start a foundation and now would be a good to start thinking about it prior to starting work on the Master Plan. Commissioner Sullivan agreed it should be an item the Commission has on the agenda.

Chair King questioned if the Commission should put efforts into discussing a foundation prior to having a group that approaches the Commission wanting to start one. Commissioner Sullivan spoke in support of having the Commission put it on the agenda and set up a Committee to get the word out and see if there are people interested.

In response to Chair King's question, Commissioner Andrews said he believed there are sports organizations that would be interested due to the need to come up with additional funding for synthetic turf. Chair King stated that the City cannot set up a Foundation. PRD Gervais said a Committee could look into how to set up a foundation, what the community wants, and what type of foundation. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Sullivan noted if the Commission heard a presentation than priorities could be set on what a foundation could do and fund. PRD Gervais proposed having a presentation on what Commissions have done in the past to determine what the Commissions role should be.

Commissioner Cheechov moved, seconded by Commissioner Sullivan, to leave things like they are on the list. Vote 8-0 in favor.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

PRD Gervais reported that the City is looking to reduce the budget by 1.3 million which is about 7.5% of the City's full budget. The portion allocated to Parks & Recreation is \$230,000. The Department's approach is about half new revenue items and half cuts. New items include new recreation programs opportunities at Ralston and Fox School and additional students at the Community Learning Center. For additional revenue the leases for city-owned facilities may be increased. One large item that may be cut is the Special Events Program that covers 12 special events put on throughout the year. Salary costs from that program will have to be redistributed into other programs. Other cuts will be in training, vehicles and other supplies and services.

Commissioner Cheechov commented that the Holiday Craft Faire is the main fundraiser for the Cottage Auxiliary and for the seniors. PRD Gervais stated he understands the Craft Faire has a good following and the City Council may decide to keep some events. Chair King suggested that Council may need to be aware where other organizations would lose as well.

In response to Commissioner Susan Wright's question PRD Gervais explained the total budget for Special Events \$140,000. The breakdown is approximately \$40,000 for administrative costs, \$25,000 for supplies and services and \$75,000 is for salaries. Revenue generated from these events covers the supplies and services.

PRD Gervais said that Recreation Specialist Spacher is expected to reduce her role with the City and will no longer be working on special events. She will still work with the teens. Chair King asked about the Teen Center and PRD Gervais said converting the Teen Center into an Art Studio that could generate more revenue is being considered. He explained currently the Teen Center is open about seven hours a week.

In response to Commissioner Bortoli's question, PRD Gervais said that all the City Departments are being asked to cut 7.5%.

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais noted staff is currently working on the Summer Activity Guide and if there any ideas to include in the brochure it will go to print in March.

PRD Gervais stated a newer staff member in the Senior Center, Laura Guluzzy, has been doing great things and is putting together a fundraiser in May for the Senior Center with a world renowned opera singer.

Commissioner Bortoli asked if there have been any leak problems in the Manor Building since improvements were made and there have not been.

In response to Commissioner Bortoli's question, PRD Gervais said the City contracts out for median maintenance, grade separation maintenance and the mowing of fields.

In response to C Cheechov's question, Chair King stated the geotechnical company that was hired to do the soils report for Semeria Park has completed their report. It then went to the City's geotechnical staff to review and they had 10 questions that needed to be answered. So far, all but two questions have been answered. When those two questions are answered and it is acceptable to the city's staff it will go back to the company to prepare a report for the Parks Manager who will bring it back to the Commission, possibly at the next meeting.

Commissioner Susan Wright questioned if the colored paper between reports in the packet is necessary but Chair King and Commissioner Cheechov preferred they remain. Chair King noted she donated some colored paper that was unsuitable for copying to the Department for packet use.

Chair King noted the Commission Appreciation Dinner is scheduled for March 5th at the Senior & Community Center.

B. Future Agenda Items

Semeria Park
Davey Glen Park
Cipriani Dog Park
Reorganization and Liaison Assignments

Commissioner Sullivan suggested the Commission consider promoting more block parties and having it on the agenda to find out what it takes for neighborhoods to put on these events.

Chair King requested there be a report on the Commissioner Training that will be hosted by the City on April 17th.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director